

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A gear assembly for transmitting torque from one shaft to another, ~~the gear assembly~~ comprising:
two intermeshing gears mounted on respective shafts, one of the gears comprising a hub member for receiving one of the shafts, ~~i~~
a toothed annular member mounted for rotation with the hub member, ~~i~~ and means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise provided between the hub member and the annular member and having a stiffness capable of reducing torsional vibrations and noise induced during rotation of the gears by the eccentricity of at least one of the gears.
2. (currently amended) A~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~C~~claim 1, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise comprises means for increasing the critical eccentricity of the gear.
3. (currently amended) A~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise comprises a resilient coupling between the hub member and the annular member.
4. (currently amended) A~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise is located between a radial surface of the hub member and an opposing radial surface of the annular member.
5. (currently amended) A~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise is located

- within a drive mechanism for transferring torque between the hub member and the annular member.
6. (currently amended) A-The gear assembly according to Claim 5, wherein one of the hub member and the annular member comprises a recess for receiving a detent of the other of the hub member and the annular member for transferring torque between the hub member and the annular member, the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise being located between opposing surfaces of the recess and the detent.
 7. (currently amended) A-The gear assembly according to Claim 6, wherein said one of the hub member and the annular member comprises a plurality of said recesses each for receiving a respective detent of the other of the hub member and the annular member, the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise being located between opposing surfaces of each recess and detent.
 8. (currently amended) A-The gear assembly according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, wherein the means for inhibiting torsional vibrations and noise comprises at least one resilient member located between opposing surfaces of the hub member and the annular member.
 9. (currently amended) A-The gear assembly according to Claim 8, wherein the means for inhibiting torsional vibrations and noise comprises a plurality of resilient members each located between respective opposing surfaces of the hub member and the annular member.
 10. (currently amended) A-The gear assembly according to Claim 9, wherein each resilient member comprises a spring for providing torsional resistance.
 11. (currently amended) A-The gear assembly according to Claim 9, wherein each resilient member comprises a plurality of springs for providing torsional resistance.

12. (currently amended) A ~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~Claim 9~~, wherein each resilient member comprises a viscoelastic member.
13. (currently amended) A ~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~any of Claims 1 to 7~~, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise comprises mutually repelling magnets provided on opposing surfaces of the hub member and the annular member.
14. (currently amended) A ~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise is arranged to maintain the phase relationship between the shafts.
15. (currently amended) A ~~The~~ gear assembly according to ~~Claim 14~~, wherein the means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise is arranged to permit a solid drive to be established between the hub member and the annular member above a predetermined drive torque.
16. (currently amended) A vacuum pump comprising at least two shafts connected together by a gear assembly comprising two intermeshing gears mounted on respective shafts, one of the gears comprising a hub member for receiving one of the shafts;
a toothed annular member mounted for rotation with the hub member; and
means for reducing torsional vibrations and noise provided between the hub member and the annular member and having a stiffness capable of reducing torsional vibrations and noise induced during rotation of the gears by the eccentricity of at least one of the gears. ~~according to any preceding claim.~~
17. (currently amended) A gear for transmitting torque from one shaft to another;
~~the gear comprising:~~
a hub member for receiving one of the shafts;
a toothed annular member mounted for rotation with the hub member; and

means provided between the hub member and the annular member having a stiffness capable of reducing torsional vibrations and noise induced during use by eccentricity of the annular member.

18. Cancelled